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Republic Pictures' Star

APRIL NO. 48

ROCKY LANE

Featuring His Stallion **BLACK JACK**

A FAWCETT PUBLICATION

WESTERN

10¢



IN
THIS
ISSUE:

ASSIGNMENT: PERIL!

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THE BIG STRIKE

By Daniel Sheldon



DUSTY HOWLAND didn't like the looks of the three men who visited him that morning. They had that scent of lawlessness about them that forty years in the rough west had taught Dusty to spot immediately. But the dream of all prospectors—the thought that just one more try would yield them a big fortune—burned hot in Dusty, and he took the job that the men offered. He needed the money to fit himself out for another prospecting expedition. Therefore, he agreed to conduct the men and their boss through abandoned Silverpile Mine for fifty dollars. The mine was played out and only a few ancient prospectors worked it, but Dusty wasn't going to argue with the men. He needed the cash to buy supplies and it certainly was easy money for a little work.

Dusty's feeling that something wasn't right with this job increased the next morning when he met the "boss", Robert Ellis. He was a soft-looking easterner, about twenty years old, who obviously knew nothing about the west and only a bit more about the project he was undertaking. He relied wholly upon the advice of the three rough-looking men, from what he should wear to how he should fill his canteen.

While the three men loaded supplies, Dusty took the youth aside. "What are you looking for in that mine, Son?" he asked.

Robert eyed Dusty for a moment. Then he said, "You're one of the party now, so I guess it's safe to tell you. My Dad was successful as a prospector out here before he settled in the east. When he died last year, he left me a map of a store of silver that he hid in this mine. I've never been in the west and couldn't make the trip here alone, so I hired these three men in Dawson City to accompany me. They're very good men, but don't know their way around mines and Dad instructed me to find someone who is familiar with this particular mine. My men inquired around town and heard that you have a fine reputation as a prospector and a miner. I trust you will be able to help me. I've followed Dad's instructions and memorized the map. I'll give you directions as we proceed."

Dusty was distressed by the youth's willingness to confide information of a possible treasure to people whom he knew nothing about.

"Do your men know about the silver?" Dusty

asked.

"Of course," Robert replied with amazement. "I told them about it at the start."

The expedition into the mine was scheduled to leave early the next morning. Before he joined Robert and his hired hands, Dusty carefully filled his ammunition belt and checked his guns. He didn't share Robert's faith in the three men.

A few hours later, Dusty led the party into the depths of old Silverpile Mine. For nearly fifty years it had been worked by hundreds of prospectors and miners, and the number of shafts and tunnels was incredible. Robert recited the directions from memory and Dusty, holding a lantern, led them through mile after mile of inky-black tunnels. He was perfectly acquainted with the mine and knew his way around innumerable obstacles, collapsed ceilings, and dangerous shafts. "The silver is supposed to be buried under timber support number three in the fourteenth chamber of the third tunnel," Robert said.

Dusty led them on, estimating that they had traveled almost five miles underground. The way continued through additional tunnels and chambers. Finally they arrived at the indicated place. "You should find the silver over there," Dusty said as he set the lantern down on the ground. He wanted to have both hands free in case of trouble. Eagerly the men hacked at the ground with pickaxes until the sound of cracking rocks was replaced by the crunching of wood.

"That's it," they all shouted excitedly. They carefully lifted a heavy chest out of the ground and gaped at its shining contents. It was full of silver bars and inside the hole were more boxes, all filled with the same gleaming metal. Dusty, excited by the fortune in silver that lay before his eyes, didn't notice one of the men quietly slip behind him.

"Dad knew what he was talking about," Robert said beaming.

"But it's not going to do you any good," one of the men said. Dusty started at this ominous remark, but became rooted to the ground as he felt a gun barrel in his back. "It's the end of the line for you treasure hunters," the tallest of the three men said with a menacing grin. "Thanks for making us

(Continued on inside back cover)

ROCKY LANE WESTERN • Executive Editor WILL LIEBERSON • Editor V. A. PROVISIERO

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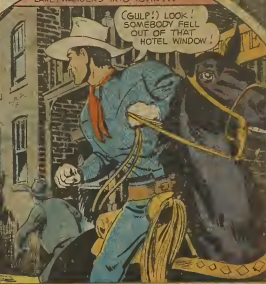
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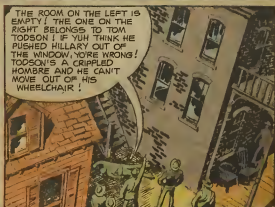
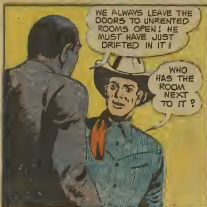
REPUBLIC PICTURES' STAR



Rocky Lane in The ACCIDENT



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I RECKON SOMEONE OUGHT TO REPORT THIS TO THE SHERIFF! SINCE I'M GOING TO RIDE PAST THE JAIL-HOUSE, I'LL DO IT!



THE JAILHOUSE---

I'LL SAY IT'S ODD, ROCKY. I'VE KNOWN TODSON FER A LONG TIME, TOO, AND I KNOW HE NEVER DRANK. I'M INCLINED TO AGREE WITH YUH THAT HIS FALLING OUT OF THE WINDOW WAS NO ACCIDENT. BUT WHAT DO WE DO NOW?

NO ONE IN THIS TOWN KNOWS ME SO I THINK I'LL TAKE A ROOM IN THAT HOTEL AND SEE IF I CAN PICK UP ANY CLUES.

OKAY, ROCKY! IN THE MEAN-WHILE, I RECKON I'D BETTER GO BREAK THE NEWS TO HILLARY'S WIDOW.



SURE WE HAVE A ROOM! IN FACT, IF YUH'D BE WILLING TO TAKE THE ROOM HILLARY FELL OUT OF, YUH CAN HAVE IT FER NOTHING!

FOR NOTHING?

THAT'S RIGHT! I'M AFRAID BECAUSE OF THAT ACCIDENT PEOPLE ARE GOING TO THINK IT'S A JINX ROOM AND I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO RENT IT AGAIN! BUT IF SOMEONE WERE TO SLEEP IN IT A FEW DAYS AND NOTHING HAPPENED TO HIM, EVERYTHING WOULD BE ALL RIGHT!

THAT'S OKAY WITH ME! I DON'T MIND SAVING A FEW DOLLARS!



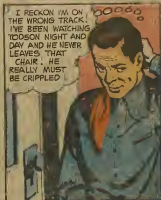
THAT'S JUST THE ROOM I WANTED, BUT DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO ASK FOR IT WITHOUT CAUSING ANY SUSPICION AS TO WHO I REALLY AM!



NOW I'LL BE ABLE TO KEEP AN EYE ON TODSON AND SEE IF HE'S REALLY CRIPPLED!



FEW DAYS LATER...



I RECKON I'M ON THE WRONG TRACK. I'VE BEEN WATCHING TODSON NIGHT AND DAY AND HE NEVER LEAVES THAT CHAIR. HE REALLY MUST BE CRIPPLED.

SHORTLY AFTER, AT THE JAILHOUSE...

WELL, IF YUH HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO PICK UP ANY CLUES, ROCKY, I RECKON WE'LL JUST HAVE TO PUT IT DOWN IN THE RECORD BOOK AS AN ACCIDENT!

I RECKON SO, SHERIFF! I'M GOING TO MOVE OFF, BUT IF YOU SHOULD FIND ANYTHING THAT WOULD THROW NEW LIGHT ON THIS CASE, GET IN TOUCH WITH ME AT THE CHIEF MARSHAL'S OFFICE IMMEDIATELY!

BUT AS ROCKY LANE HEADS OUT OF TOWN...

IT LOOKS AS IF SOMEONE'S MOVING!

WHY, IT'S MRS. HILLARY! WHOA, BLACK JACK!

IT SEEMS MY LATE HUSBAND BORROWED A LOT OF MONEY ON THE RANCH; AND THE MAN HE BORROWED IT FROM FORCLOSED THE UNPAID MORTGAGE!

EXCUSE ME, MRS. HILLARY, BUT I WAS A FRIEND OF YOUR HUSBAND SO I'M TAKING THE LIBERTY OF SAYING THIS TO YOU! JUST BECAUSE THE STORY HAS GOTTEN AROUND THAT YOUR HUSBAND GOT DRUNK AND IT'S HURT HIS REPUTATION, IS NO REASON FOR YOU TO CLOSE YOUR PROSPEROUS RANCH AND MOVE!

TO MY DYING DAY, I'LL NEVER BELIEVE THAT STORY! BUT THAT'S NOT THE REASON FOR MY MOVING!

BUT IF THE RANCH WAS SO SUCCESSFUL, WHY SHOULD HE HAVE WANTED TO BORROW ANY MONEY?

I DON'T KNOW! I MUST ADMIT IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE TO ME, BUT THEN I NEVER DID HAVE A HEAD FOR BUSINESS!

DIDN'T THE PAPERS THE MAN SHOWED YOU SAY WHAT THE LOAN WAS FOR?

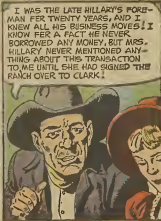
I WAS TOO HEARTSICK ABOUT MY POOR HUSBAND'S DEATH TO CHECK THE PAPERS CAREFULLY!

WHERE ARE THOSE PAPERS NOW?



WHEN I SIGNED OVER THE RANCH TO THE NEW OWNER, JED CLARK, HE RIPPED THEM UP!

RIPPED THEM UP! NOW THERE'S NO WAY TO CHECK IF THOSE PAPERS WERE REALLY BONAFIDE!



I WAS THE LATE HILLARY'S FOREMAN FOR TWENTY YEARS, AND I KNEW ALL HIS BUSINESS MOVES! I KNOW FOR A FACT HE NEVER BORROWED ANY MONEY, BUT MRS. HILLARY NEVER MENTIONED ANYTHING ABOUT THIS TRANSACTION TO ME UNTIL SHE HAD SIGNED THE RANCH OVER TO CLARK!



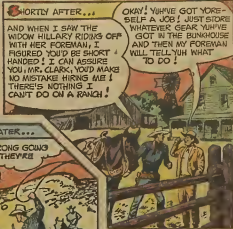
I REALIZE NOW THAT I ACTED LIKE A FOOL, BUT IT'S TOO LATE TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT!

THERE MIGHT STILL BE A WAY OUT! I SUGGEST YOU GET A ROOM AT THE HOTEL AND STAY THERE UNTIL YOU HEAR FROM ME!



JUST WHAT DO YOU AIM TO DO, ROCKY?

I'M NOT SURE MYSELF, BUT THE FIRST THING I AIM TO DO IS GET MYSELF A JOB ON THE RANCH! MAYBE I CAN FIND OUT WHAT'S GOING ON!



SHORTLY AFTER...

AND WHEN I SAW THE WIDOW HILLARY RIDING OFF WITH HER FOREMAN, I FIGURED YOU'D BE SHORT HANDED! I CAN ASSURE YOU, MR. CLARK, YOU'D MAKE NO MISTAKE HIRING ME! THERE'S NOTHING I CAN'T DO ON A RANCH!

OKAY! YUH'VE GOT YORE-SELF A JOB! JUST STORE WHATEVER GEAR YUH'VE GOT IN THE BUNGHOUSE AND THEN YUH FOREMAN WILL TELL YUH WHAT TO DO!



BUT LATE THAT NIGHT...

IT'S ALMOST TWO IN THE MORNING. WHY SHOULD THAT LIGHT STILL BE ON IN THE RANCH HOUSE?

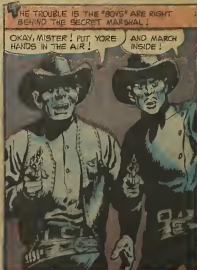
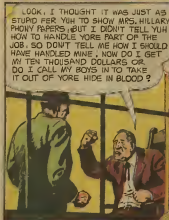
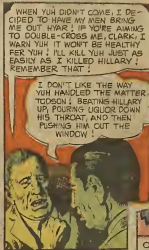
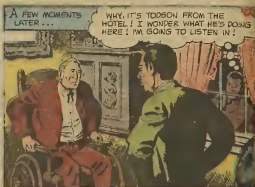


A FEW DAYS LATER...

THERE'S NOTHING WRONG GOING ON ON THIS SPREAD! THEY'RE RUNNING IT LIKE A LEGITIMATE RANCH AND THERE HASN'T BEEN ONE WORD OF ANY CROOKED DEAL!



AND THAT BUCKBOARD... IT DOESN'T BELONG TO ANYONE ON THE RANCH! MAYBE THIS IS THE BREAK I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR!



WE FOUND THIS HOWLER SNOOPING OUTSIDE THE WINDOW!

WHY, HE'S THE SAME VARMINT WHO HAD THE ROOM NEXT TO MINE IN THE HOTEL! MAYBE HE WAS TRYING TO GET SOMETHING ON ME, TOO! SEARCH HIM!



AND AFTER A THOROUGH SEARCH...

YUH WERE RIGHT! HIS NAME'S ROCKY LANE! HE'S A SECRET MARSHAL!

THAT'S ALL I WANTED TO KNOW! WE'LL HAVE TO KILL HIM AND WE'LL DO IT RIGHT NOW!



BUT WHILE EVERYONE WAS LOOKING AT THE CROOKS, THE EVER-ALERT SECRET MARSHAL MADE THE MOST OF THE FEW SECONDS AND MOVED UP BEHIND THE WHEELCHAIR!



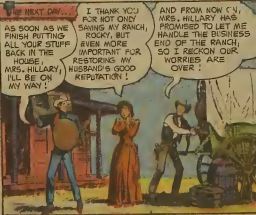
IT'S OKAY, I'LL GET HIM!

BUT THERE'S NO ONE FASTER ON THE DRAW THAN ROCKY LANE AND BEFORE CLARK CAN EVEN REMOVE HIS GUN FROM ITS HOLSTER...

IF YOU WANT TO GO TO JAIL IN ONE PIECE, I'D LEAVE THAT GUN RIGHT WHERE IT IS--- IN THE HOLSTER!



NOW TWO OF YOU WILL WHEEL TODSON TOWARDS THE JAILHOUSE WHILE CLARK WILL FOLLOW WITH HIS HANDS IN THE AIR! AND REMEMBER, ONE FALSE MOVE AND THESE SIX-SHOOTERS WILL START SPITTING BULLETS!



THE NEXT DAY...

AS SOON AS WE FINISH PUTTING ALL YOUR STUFF BACK IN THE HOUSE, MRS. HILLARY, I'LL BE ON MY WAY!

I THANK YOU FOR NOT ONLY SAVING MY RANCH, ROCKY, BUT EVEN MORE IMPORTANT FOR RESTORING MY HUSBAND'S GOOD REPUTATION!

AND FROM NOW ON, MRS. HILLARY HAS PROMISED TO LET ME HANDLE THE BUSINESS END OF THE RANCH, SO I RECKON OUR WORRIES ARE OVER!



HOWDY, FELLAS! I WON'T BE ABLE TO GO TO THE DANCE SATURDAY NIGHT!

HUH? WHY NOT, SAGEBRUSH?

THE GAL I WAS GOING TO TAKE TOOK SICK!

IS THAT SO?



YUP, THEY HAD TO TAKE HER TO A HOSPITAL!

THAT'S TOO BAD, SAGEBRUSH!



YUP! THEY PUT HER IN A ROOM BY HERSELF!

HUH? THEY PUT YORE GAL IN A ROOM BY HERSELF?



YUP-- SHE WAS TOO CUTE FOR WARDS!



gopher face
GOOD NIGHT!

HELLO, GOPHERFACE! HOW IS YORE INSOMNIA? DID YUH TAKE MY ADVICE?

YES, AND IT SURE WAS ROTTEN ADVICE AT THAT!



HUH? IT WAS ROTTEN ADVICE?

IT SURE WAS!



WHY, WHAT HAPPENED?

WELL, I GOT INTO BED AND STARTED COUNTING SHEEP JUMPING OVER A HURDLE LIKE YUH SAID!



WELL, I KEPT COUNTING AND DO YUH KNOW WHEN I HAD COUNTED 24,470 OF THE SHEEP, I WAS SO KEEN ON MAKING IT THIRTY THOUSAND...



...THAT I HAD TO GET UP AND MAKE MYSELF SOME BLACK COFFEE IN ORDER TO KEEP AWAKE!



Rocky Lane

REPUBLIC PICTURES' STAR

in The DEVIL'S HOOF

HORSE RUSTLERS HAVE BEEN AT WORK AROUND TURANGO COUNTY AND THE SHERIFF THAR IS HAVING HIS HANDS FULL! YUH MIGHT RIDE OUT THAT WAY, ROCKY, AND SEE IF YUH CAN LEND HIM A HAND!

SURE THING, CHIEF! LET'S GO, BLACK JACK!

CHIEF MARSHAL'S OFFICE

MEANWHILE, AT THE DEVIL'S HOOF RANCH OUTSIDE OF TURANGO...

OKAY, BOSS, WE GOT THE CREAM OF THE CROP AND NO ONE SAW US COME OR GO!

WHAT'S MORE, MASINE, WE FOUND A COUPLE OF HORSES SADDLED UP SO WE TOOK THEM ALONG, TOO!

WHAR ARE THEY?

WE'RE RIDING THEM, BOSS!

AND WHAR ARE THE HORSES YUH RODE OUT OF HYAR?

(GULP!) IN OUR EXCITEMENT WE LEFT THEM BEHIND!

I RECKON WE'D BETTER GO RIGHT BACK AND GET THEM!

HOLD ON, YUH FOOLS! BY NOW THE RUSTLING MIGHT HAVE BEEN DISCOVERED! IF YUH WENT BACK FER YOUR HORSES, THEY'D HAVE THE GOODS ON YUH!



BUT, BOSS, WE CAN'T LEAVE THOSE HORSES THAR! WHY WITH OUR DEVIL'S HOOF BRAND ON THEM, IT'LL TAKE THEM NO TIME TO TRACE THE RUSTLING RIGHT BACK HYAR!

I KNOW THAT! THAT'S WHY WE'VE GOT TO THROW THEM OFF THE TRACK!



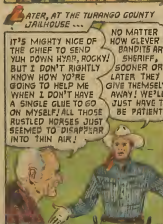
BUT HOW ARE YUH GOING TO DO THAT, BOSS?

LEAVE THAT TO ME! IN THE MEANWHILE, YUH'D BETTER REBRAND THOSE NEW HORSES WITH OUR MARK!



OKAY, BOSS! OUR BRAND WILL EASILY COVER ALL THOSE BRAND MARKS ON THESE HORSES!

OUR BRAND WILL COVER ANY OTHER BRAND MARK! THAT'S WHY I SELECTED IT!



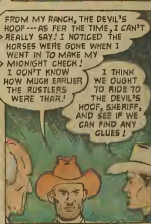
IT'S MIGHTY NICE OF THE CHIEF TO SEND YUH DOWN HYAR, ROCKY! BUT I DON'T RIGHTLY KNOW HOW YO'RE GOING TO HELP ME WHEN I DON'T HAVE A SINGLE GLUE TO GO ON MYSELF! ALL THOSE RUSTLED HORSES JUST SEEMED TO DISAPPEAR INTO THIN AIR!

NO MATTER HOW GLEVER BANDITS ARE, SHERIFF, SOONER OR LATER THEY GIVE THEMSELVES AWAY! WE'LL JUST HAVE TO BE PATIENT!



EXCUSE ME FER BARGING IN LIKE THIS, SHERIFF, BUT SOME OF MY HORSES WERE JUST RUSTLED!

RUSTLED! WHERE? WHEN?



FROM MY RANCH, THE DEVIL'S HOOF---AS FER THE TIME, I CAN'T REALLY SAY! I NOTICED THE HORSES WERE GONE WHEN I WENT IN TO MAKE MY MIDNIGHT CHECK! I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH EARLIER THE RUSTLERS WERE THAR!

I THINK WE OUGHT TO RIDE TO THE DEVIL'S HOOF, SHERIFF, AND SEE IF WE CAN FIND ANY GLUES!



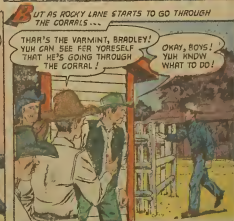
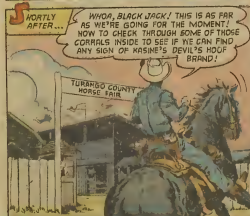
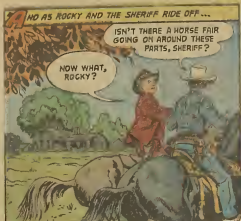
THE RUSTLERS MADE A CLEAN GETAWAY AGAIN, ROCKY! THEY DIDN'T LEAVE A GLUE!

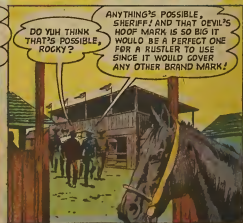
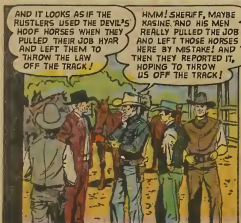
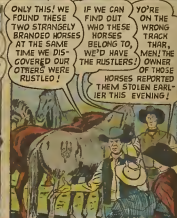
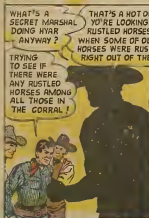
WELL, IF WE RUN INTO YOUR HORSES, MR. MASINE, I'M SURE WE'LL HAVE NO TROUBLE IDENTIFYING THEM---



--- WITH THAT BRAND MARK! IT WOULD BE PRETTY HARD FOR ANY RUSTLER TO COVER THAT UP!

I HOPE YO'RE RIGHT!





BUT HOW CAN WE CHECK ON IT, ROCKY?

YOU RIDE UP TO KASINE'S SPREAD, SHERIFF, AND TELL HIM WE FOUND HIS HORSES! THEN NO MATTER WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO, KEEP THEM OUTSIDE HIS RANCH HOUSE UNTIL I GET A CHANCE TO COUNT THE HORSES IN HIS CORRAL AND CHECK THEM AGAINST HIS RECORD BOOK IN THE OFFICE!

LATER ...

WE FOUND THESE HYAR TWO HORSES, KASINE! THEY'VE GOT YORE BRAND MARK ON THEM SO I RECKON THESE MUST BE THE ONES YUH CLAIMED WERE RUSTLED!

YUH SURE WORKED FAST, SHERIFF!

YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN, KASINE! SHERIFFS ALWAYS DO GOOD WORK AND THEY WORK FAST!

WHAR DID YUH COME FROM? WHAT ARE YUH DOING WITH MY RECORD BOOK?

I CAME THROUGH THE BACK AND, AS FOR THIS RECORD BOOK, YOU CAN HAVE IT BACK ONCE YOU TELL ME HOW COME YOU'VE GOT ALMOST FIVE HUNDRED HORSES IN YOUR CORRAL AND ONLY ONE HUNDRED LISTED IN YOUR BOOK?

JUST WHAT ARE YUH GETTING AT?

JUST THIS, KASINE! WE'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR THE RUSTLERS AND NOW WE'VE GOT THEM! YOU AND YOUR MEN!

HELP! TUXTON! EVANS! THE LAW IS ONTO US!

THE FIRST ONE OF YOU HOMBRES TO REACH FOR HIS GUN WILL FIND IT'S THE LAST THING HE EVER DOES!

I'LL KEEP THEM COVERED, SHERIFF! YOU PUT THE HANDCUFFS ON ALL OF THEM!

LATER ...

WELL, THIS IS ONE TIME WE CAN SAY THE DEVIL GOT HIS DUE!

THAT'S RIGHT, SHERIFF, AND NOW I RECKON I'D BETTER BE GETTING BACK TO THE CHIEF MARSHAL! HE'LL BE GLAD TO KNOW THAT THIS CASE HAS BEEN CLEARED UP!



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REPUBLIC PICTURES' STAR

Rocky Lane

in



ASSIGNMENT: PERIL!



THAT STEP I TOOK
AWAY DID THE
TRICK! NOW I'LL
HAVE THAT LAWDOG
ROCKY LANE, JUST
WHERE I WANT
HIM!



THE REGIONAL POSTMASTER'S OFFICE ...

MY NAME'S
ROCKY LANE!
THE CHIEF
MARSHAL
SAID YOU'D BE
EXPECTING
ME!

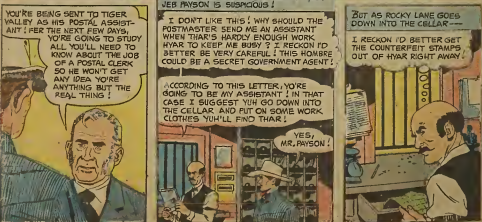
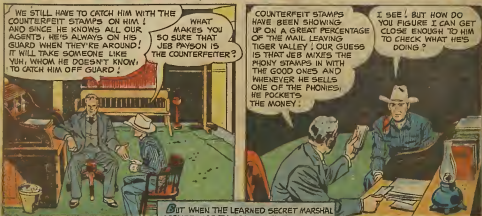
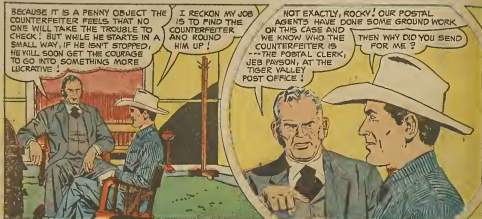
POST-
MASTER
PRIVATE

COME RIGHT IN,
MR. LANE! I HAVE A
SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT
FOR A SECRET MARSHAL
AND YORE CHIEF SAID
YUH WERE HIS BEST!

OUR PROBLEM IS
COUNTERFEIT
POSTAGE STAMPS!

COUNTERFEIT STAMPS! WHY
SHOULD A COUNTERFEITER
BOTHR WITH A PENNY
OBJECT LIKE STAMPS?





SHORTLY AFTER...

I STUDIED SO MANY STAMPS, I COULD TELL A PHONY ONE WITH MY EYES CLOSED, BUT I DON'T SEE ANY HERE, EITHER THEIR SUSPICIONS OF JEB ARE FALSE, OR HE'S WISE TO ME AND HAS HIDDEN THE COUNTERFEIT STAMPS!

I'M GOING OUT FER LUNCH. YUH CAN RUN THE PLACE YORESELF UNTIL I GET BACK, THEN YUH CAN GO OUT!

LUNCH IS THE LAST THING ON MY MIND! I JUST AIM TO SNEAK AROUND AND ENTER THE CELLAR FROM THE BACK ENTRANCE AND---

YES, SIR!

---CHECK ON WHATEVER PAPERS HE MIGHT HAVE IN HIS CLOTHES ---JUST IN CASE HE REALLY ISN'T A POST OFFICE CLERK!

SECONDS LATER---

THAT'S NOTHING IN THEM. OF COURSE THAT DOESN'T PROVE ANYTHING. HE COULD BE CARRYING HIS REAL IDENTIFICATION PAPERS IN THE WORK CLOTHES. THE QUESTION IS, HOW CAN I FIND OUT? WAIT A SECOND! I JUST GOT AN IDEA!

I'LL JUST REMOVE THIS LOOGE STEP! WHEN HE COMES DOWN LATER TO CHANGE INTO HIS OWN CLOTHES, I DOUBT IF HE'LL NOTICE IT AND HE MOST LIKELY WILL FALL AND knock HIMSELF OUT. THAT WILL GIVE ME A CHANCE TO SEARCH HIM WITHOUT HIS GETTING WISE.

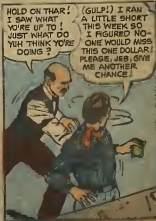
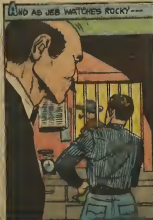
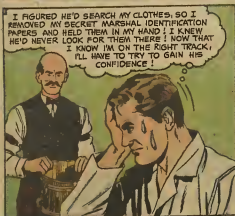
LOSING TIME --- IT'S QUITTING TIME! I'LL PUT THE THINGS AWAY! YUH CAN GO DOWN AND GET DRESSED!

YES, SIR!

AND AS THE EVER ALERT ROCKY LANE GOES DOWN INTO THE CELLAR---

HELP!

IT WORKED! NOW I CAN SEARCH HIM!



ROCKY LANE WESTERN

IF YUH WANT TO MAKE SOME EASY MONEY, YUH DON'T HAVE TO STEAL! THE GOVERNMENT CHECKS UP ON HOW MANY STAMPS WE SELL AND THEY NOTICE EVEN ONE CENT MISSING!

REALLY?
WHAT IS IT?



NOW THAT I KNOW YOU'RE EVEN WILLING TO STEAL TO MAKE AN EXTRA BUCK, I FEEL I CAN TRUST YUH! I'VE BEEN PRINTING COUNTERFEIT STAMPS WHICH I SUBSTITUTE FER THE REAL ONES! YOU MEAN YOU SELL THOSE COUNTERFEITS AND POCKET THE MONEY?



EXACTLY! AND SINCE ALL THE REAL STAMPS CAN ALWAYS BE ACCOUNTED FOR, NO ONE IS THE WISER! YUH LOOK LIKE A REGULAR GUY AND I'M WILLING TO CUT YUH IN ON THE RACKET!

GREAT! WHERE ARE THE STAMPS?



I HAVE ONLY A FEW LEFT, BUT NOW THAT I KNOW YOU'RE WITH ME I'LL RUN OFF A NEW BATCH TONIGHT!

CAN I BE OF ANY HELP?



NOT REALLY, BUT YOU'RE WELCOME TO COME OVER ANYWAY!



WHAT NIGHT---

OKAY! I'VE GOT THEM ALL FINISHED! NOW IN THE MORNING WE'LL JUST MIX THEM IN WITH THE REAL STAMPS!



YOU'RE NOT MIXING ANYTHING WITH ANYTHING! I'LL TAKE THOSE STAMPS AS EVIDENCE!

I THOUGHT YUH WERE A LANDDOG WHEN YUH FIRST SHOWED UP, BUT YUH PUT ON A GREAT PERFORMANCE! YUH REALLY CONVINCED ME YUH WERE ON THE SAME SIDE OF THE LAW THAT I WAS---THE WRONG SIDE!



SINCE YOU'RE GOING TO LOCK ME UP, DO YUH MIND IF I GET SOME OF MY BELONGINGS OUT OF THE CLOSET?

GO RIGHT AHEAD!



BUT ROCKY LANE DOESN'T KNOW THERE'S A BED HIDDEN BEHIND THE CLOSET AND---



BEFORE THE DAZED SECRET MARSHAL CAN GET HIS SENSES BACK ...



MAKE YOURSELF COMFORTABLE IN THE BED, MARSHAL!

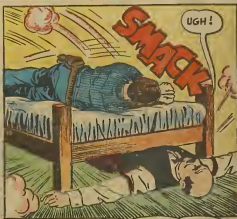
YOU'RE GOING TO BE IN THAR A LONG TIME---UNTIL YUH SMOTHER TO DEATH!



BUT THE COMBINED WEIGHT OF THE BED AND ROCKY LANE ARE TOO MUCH FOR JEB!



(GRUNT!) (GRUNT!) THE BED'S STARTING TO FALL BACK!



UGH!

I RECKON IT MUST BE MIGHTY UNCOMFORTABLE UNDER THIS BED, JEB! BUT AS SOON AS I FINISH FREEING MYSELF---



B-I-P!

---I'LL MAKE THINGS MORE COMFORTABLE FOR YOU!



IN FACT, I AM TO SEE THAT YOU GET A ROOM ALL BY YOURSELF AT THE STATE PENITENTIARY! NOW I'LL JUST DESTROY THAT COUNTERFEIT STAMP MACHINE OF YOURS AND WE CAN MARK THIS CASE CLOSED!



ROPING 'N' RIDING

With

ALLAN "Rocky" LANE

AND BLACK JACK

HOWDY, PARTNERS,

I WAS INTERESTED IN FINDING OUT RECENTLY THAT A LOT OF FOLKS THINK A LARIAT IS USED BY A COWBOY FOR JUST ONE THING---ROPING STEERS.

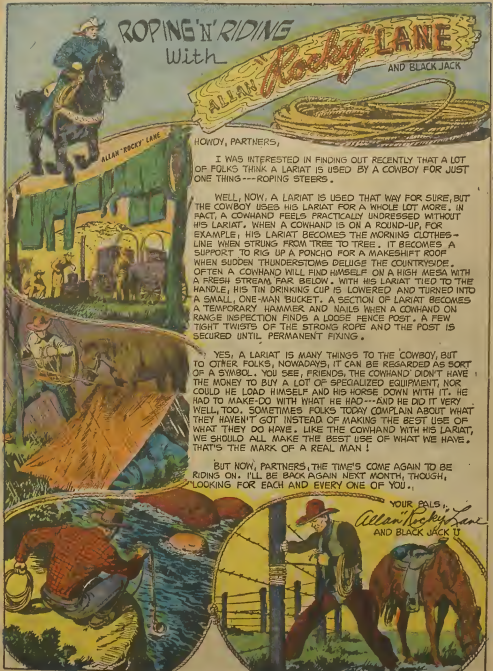
WELL, NOW, A LARIAT IS USED THAT WAY FOR SURE, BUT THE COWBOY USES HIS LARIAT FOR A WHOLE LOT MORE. IN FACT, A COWHAND FEELS PRACTICALLY UNDRESSED WITHOUT HIS LARIAT. WHEN A COWHAND IS ON A ROUND-UP, FOR EXAMPLE, HIS LARIAT BECOMES THE MORNING CLOTHES-LINE WHEN STRUNG FROM TREE TO TREE. IT BECOMES A SUPPORT TO RIG UP A PONCHO FOR A MAKESHIFT ROOF WHEN SUDDEN THUNDERSTORMS DELUGE THE COUNTRYSIDE. OFTEN A COWHAND WILL FIND HIMSELF ON A HIGH MESA WITH A FRESH STREAM FAR BELOW. WITH HIS LARIAT TIED TO THE HANDLE, HIS TIN DRINKING CUP IS LOWERED AND TURNED INTO A SMALL, ONE-MAN 'BUCKET'. A SECTION OF LARIAT BECOMES A TEMPORARY HAMMER AND NAILS WHEN A COWHAND ON RANGE INSPECTION FINDS A LOOSE FENCE POST. A FEW TIGHT TWISTS OF THE STRONG ROPE AND THE POST IS SECURED UNTIL PERMANENT FIXING.

YES, A LARIAT IS MANY THINGS TO THE 'COWBOY, BUT TO OTHER FOLKS, NOWADAYS, IT CAN BE REGARDED AS SORT OF A SYMBOL. YOU SEE, FRIENDS, THE COWHAND DIDN'T HAVE THE MONEY TO BUY A LOT OF SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT, NOR COULD HE LOAD HIMSELF AND HIS HORSE DOWN WITH IT. HE HAD TO MAKE-DO WITH WHAT HE HAD---AND HE DID IT VERY WELL, TOO. SOMETIMES FOLKS TODAY COMPLAIN ABOUT WHAT THEY HAVEN'T GOT INSTEAD OF MAKING THE BEST USE OF WHAT THEY DO HAVE. LIKE THE COWHAND WITH HIS LARIAT, WE SHOULD ALL MAKE THE BEST USE OF WHAT WE HAVE. THAT'S THE MARK OF A REAL MAN!

BUT NOW, PARTNERS, THE TIME'S COME AGAIN TO BE RIDING ON. I'LL BE BACK AGAIN NEXT MONTH, THOUGH, LOOKING FOR EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU..

YOUR PAL,

ALLAN "Rocky" LANE
AND BLACK JACK



DEE DICKENS



HOWDY, FELLOWS! YORE BOSS
JUST HIRED ME TO HELP YUH
HOMBRES PAINT ALL THE BARN
AND STABLES ON THIS RANCH!

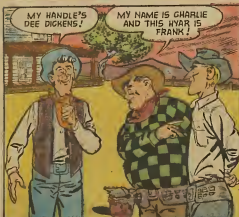
GOOD! WE SURE
COULD USE ANOTHER
HAND!

THAT'S RIGHT!
THAR'S LOTS TO
DO HYAR!



MY HANDLE'S
DEE DICKENS!

MY NAME IS GHARLIE
AND THIS HYAR IS
FRANK!

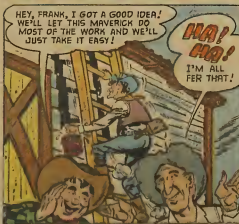


I'M GLAD TO KNOW YUH, FELLOWS!
WELL, I RECKON I'LL GRAB A
BRUSH AND GET TO
WORK!



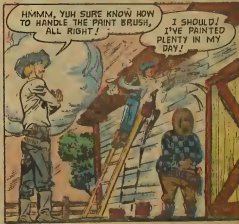
HEY, FRANK, I GOT A GOOD IDEA!
WE'LL LET THIS MAVERICK DO
MOST OF THE WORK AND WE'LL
JUST TAKE IT EASY!

**HA!
HA!**
I'M ALL
FER THAT!



HMMM, YUH SURE KNOW HOW
TO HANDLE THE PAINT BRUSH,
ALL RIGHT!

I SHOULD!
I'VE PAINTED
PLENTY IN MY
DAY!





HEY, FRANK, JUST WATCH HOW WELL DEE PAINTS!

YUP, HE SURE DOES A GOOD JOB! IT'S A PLEASURE TO SEE A GOOD PAINTER AT WORK!



HA, HA!
WHILE WE'RE FLATTERING HIM, WE'RE JUST WATCHING AND HE'S DOING ALL THE WORK! AND WE'LL GET PAID JUST THE SAME!

HA,
HA!



OBSERVE HIS STYLE CAREFULLY, FRANK! IT'S VERY PROFESSIONAL!

YO'RE RIGHT, CHARLIE! THAT'S NO QUESTION ABOUT IT!



SEE, FRANK, HOW SURE EVERY MOVE HE MAKES IS! HE'S A REAL GRADE-A PAINTER!

YES, THAT'S FER SURE! I'M CERTAINLY LEARNING A LOT!



SHUCKS, FELLOWS, DON'T GET THE WRONG IDEA! I'M NOT A GOOD PAINTER AT ALL--

HA, HA!



LOOK AT THOSE CRITTERS! THEY'RE JUST STANDING DOING NOTHING AND LETTING ME DO ALL THE WORK!



THEY'VE BEEN MAKING A CHUMP OUT OF ME! THEY'VE BEEN PRETENDING TO ADMIRE MY WORK JUST SO THEY COULD STAND LOOKING AT ME WITHOUT DOING ANYTHING THEMSELVES!

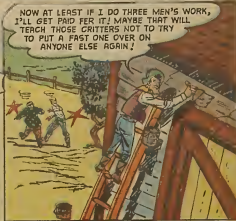
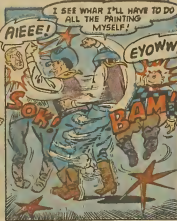


THEY'VE BEEN PLAY-ACTING THAT THEY'VE BEEN GETTING AN EYEFUL! WELL, HYAR'S WHAR I SEE TO IT THAT THEY REALLY DO GET AN EYEFUL ---

OF PAINT!



ROCKY LANE WESTERN



Extra! Extra! EXTRA!

**YOU...
CAN GET
"ROCKY'S"**



**PHOTOGRAPH WITH "BLACK JACK"
AUTOGRAPHED TO YOU PERSONALLY!**

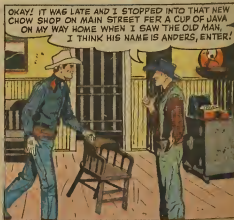
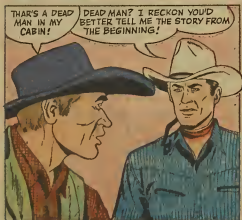
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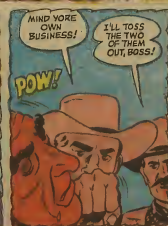
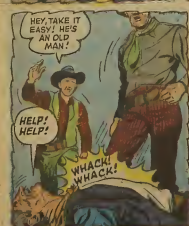
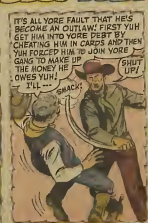
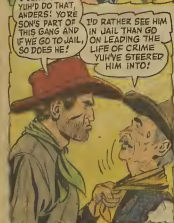
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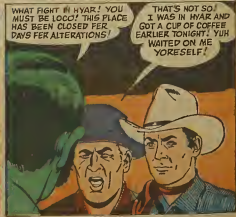
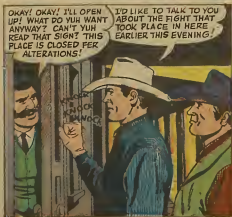
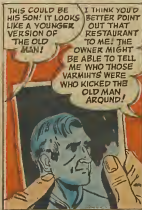
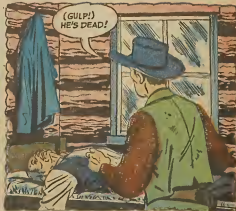
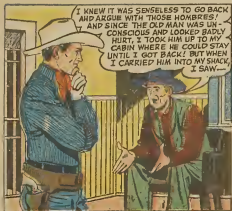
NAME Ray

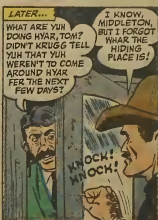
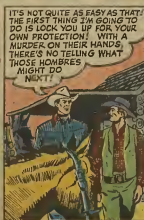
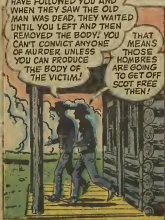
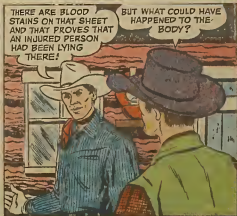
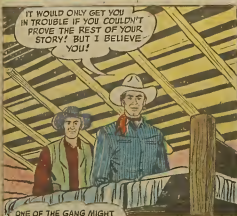
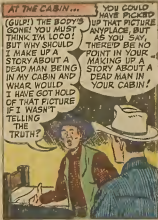
ADDRESS Blue Hills Hwy

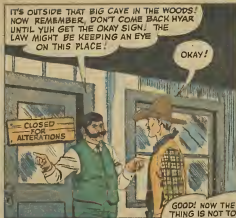
(If you want 5 LARGE pictures of "ROCKY" and "BLACK JACK" all autographed to you personally, enclose \$1.00. Address: ROCKY LANE, 4024 North Radford Avenue, North Hollywood, Calif.)





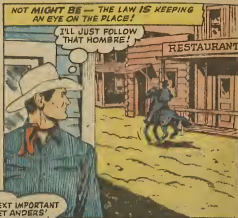






IT'S OUTSIDE THAT BIG CAVE IN THE WOODS! NOW REMEMBER, DON'T COME BACK HYAR UNTIL YUH GET THE OKAY SIGN! THE LAW MIGHT BE KEEPING AN EYE ON THIS PLACE!

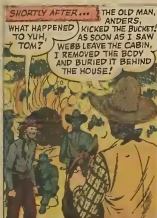
OKAY!



NOT MIGHT BE — THE LAW IS KEEPING AN EYE ON THE PLACE!

I'LL JUST FOLLOW THAT HOMBRE!

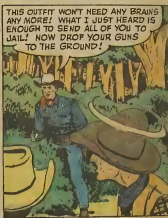
RESTAURANT



SHORTLY AFTER... THE OLD MAN, ANDERS, KICKED THE BUCKET! AS SOON AS I SAW WEBB LEAVE THE CABIN, I REMOVED THE BODY AND BURIED IT BEHIND THE HOUSE!

GOOD! NOW THE NEXT IMPORTANT THING IS NOT TO LET ANDERS' SON KNOW WHAT HAPPENED! IF HE SHOULD FIND OUT I KILLED THE OLD MAN, HE'D DROP US FER GOOD AND WE NEED HIM!

I'LL SAY WE NEED HIM! HE'S TURNING OUT TO BE THE REAL BRAINS OF THIS OUTFIT!



THIS OUTFIT WON'T NEED ANY BRAINS ANY MORE! WHAT I JUST HEARD IS ENOUGH TO SEND ALL OF YOU TO JAIL! NOW DROP YOUR GUNS TO THE GROUND!



BUT, AS THE BANDITS FOLLOW THE SECRET MARSHAL'S ORDERS...

THAT'S RIGHT! WHAT'S GOING ON HYAR? DROP ALL YOUR SHOOTING IRONS TO THE GROUND!

IT'S GOOD YOU SHOWED UP, ANDERS! THIS LAWDOG WAS INTENDING TO LOCK US UP!



DROP THOSE SIX-SHOOTERS, MISTER!

BEFORE YOU ASK ME TO DO THAT, I SUGGEST YOU ASK YOUR GANG MEMBERS WHY I WAS GOING TO LOCK THEM UP!

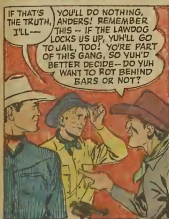
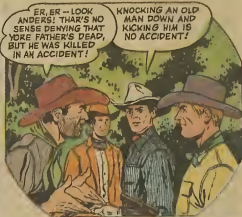
I DON'T KNOW WHAT HE'S TALKING ABOUT, ANDERS!



THEY JUST MURDERED YOUR FATHER!

MURDERED MY FATHER?

IT'S A LIE!



FOR A LONG MOMENT YOUNG ANDERS GIVES THE THOUGHT A GREAT DEAL OF CONSIDERATION, AND THEN ...



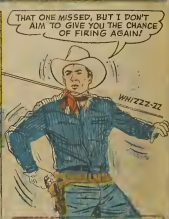
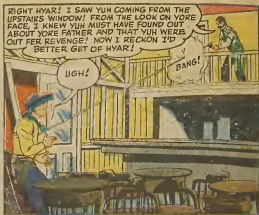
AND WHEN ROCKY LANE REGAINS CONSCIOUSNESS!

ANDERS MUST HAVE KILLED THEM ALL IN REVENGE! ALL BUT THE ONE MISSING MEMBER OF THE GANG -- THE OWNER OF THAT RESTAURANT!



AND IF I'M NOT MISTAKEN, HE MUST BE ON HIS WAY THERE NOW TO FINISH UP THE JOB! LET'S GO, BLACK JACK!





The Big Strike

(Continued from inside front cover)

rich." Dusty felt his guns being taken from his holsters by the man standing behind him.

He thought to himself, "It would be suicide to try anything now!"

"What do you plan to do with us?" he asked the men.

"Kill you both," came the cool reply. "It'll look like an accident."

Dusty was thinking hard. "And then how do you figure to get out of here? You have to know this mine to find your way out."

The three men looked at each other. "He's right," one of them said. "We didn't bank on the mine being so complicated." They went into a huddle. "Let's make the old man lead us out of here," the tall one whispered. "I'll drop match sticks along the way so we can find our way back. When we get near the entrance, we'll polish off both of them and come back for the silver." The others nodded in agreement.

"Okay, old man," the tall one said, "lead us out and we'll let you both go. Nothing held against either of you if you forget the whole thing."

Robert cringed in terror, but Dusty's mind was working fast and he promptly nodded. "Fine," he said. "I'll get you out on those terms."

Once again he led the four of them through seemingly endless chambers and tunnels. Presently they emerged into a chamber and Dusty held his lantern high. "Hey, what's that?" one of the men asked. He pointed to a sign that read: "Caution — Blasting Operations Under Way in this Tunnel Today."

"What does that mean?" they demanded of Dusty.

"A couple of miners still work around here," he replied, "and they blast now and then. It's a warning to stay clear of the blasting area."

"Then get us out of here," the tall man said with a trace of panic in his voice.

"Why should I?" Dusty said. "You're going to kill us anyway. You can't fool me. We might as well die together when the blast goes off."

"We'll kill you right now if you don't lead us out."

"Then how will you get out?" Dusty said quietly. "You don't know your way around the mine. You might be ten feet from the TNT when it goes off."

The three men looked at him desperately. "Hand over your guns," Dusty said, "and I'll lead you out."

The men whispered among themselves for

a moment. Then, slowly, they handed their guns over to Dusty. He stuck two of them in his belt and covered them with the third. "Now get moving," he growled. "I'll tell you which way to go."

In about half an hour, a stream of light indicated the entrance. "Now march along quietly," Dusty said as he noticed two of the men whispering. "I've got you covered."

Suddenly, the tall man wheeled around and charged headlong toward Dusty. In his hand, a long knife blade gleamed. Dusty fired from the hip, but the knife-wielder staggered on and lunged at him violently. Dusty fired again and the tall man crumpled to the floor, wounded, but his two companions were on top of Dusty before he could fire at them. They sent him crashing to the ground beneath their combined weight and grappled with him for the guns.

Suddenly, with a tremendous effort, Dusty wrested himself free for a split second. He fired point-blank into the face of one of his attackers and then wheeled around to crack the other in the face with the barrel of his six-shooter. The battle ended as suddenly as it had begun. Dusty wearily lifted himself to his feet and surveyed the bloody forms that lay stretched around him.

Robert, who had been cringing against the wall of the tunnel, now stepped out and grasped Dusty's hand. "We'd both be dead if not for you, Dusty!" he said. "I don't know how to thank you."

They left one dead man in the tunnel and loaded the two who had survived the battle on horses and delivered them to the sheriff's office.

As they left the office, Robert, still shaking from his close brush with death, said to Dusty, "It was lucky that they were blasting in the mine today. Otherwise, we wouldn't have had a chance!"

"THERE WAS no blasting in that mine, Son!" Dusty said with a smile. "That sign is over twenty years old! Someone just forgot to remove it!"

"Are you serious?" Robert gasped.

"I sure am," Dusty replied. "I had to think of something quick because I know those fellows weren't going to let us go. So I remembered where that sign was and went through that chamber to take a chance on it!"

Robert was so grateful that he shared the silver fifty-fifty with Dusty. The old prospector had finally gotten his one big strike!

THE END



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